

Further your career

> HANDS-ON LEARNING

A brush with the creative

Design courses can exercise both sides of the brain, writes **Joan-Maree Hargreaves**.

FROM object designers to architects, emerging ceramicists to marketing managers of small enterprises – people from a range of professions can refresh their design skills or gain new ones by taking a short course at a specialist college or through a continuing education program.

“Every creative practitioner, at various stages in their career, looks to upgrade or broaden their skill set,” says Elisabeth Burke, continuing education program co-ordinator at the University of NSW’s College of Fine Arts.

“Undertaking a short course enables practitioners to continue working while also studying.”

Short courses at the college target specific design profession needs ranging from graphics illustration to learning how to photograph artworks.

“For example, some courses help to strengthen weaker areas in a professional’s skill base, such as courses that teach specialised rendering techniques in a non-digital environment,” says Burke.

Time-poor students also have the

option of taking a design course offered by the college’s online arm, COFA Enrich.

Courses cover a range of areas from web design to designing for retail, exhibitions and hospitality, and involve both practical projects and theory.

“Short courses are a fantastic way to brush up on your creative skills or gain valuable experience in a design discipline which might have always held a special place in your heart,” says Simon Brushfield, head of school (graphic design, art and design) at the specialist design college Raffles.

“Everyone is creative, just some people need to dig a little deeper to find those golden nuggets. Once they’re found, people become wealthy on a much deeper personal level than they ever expected.”

The college hosts a week-long summer camp in both fashion design and graphic design and this will soon be expanded to cater for students interested in becoming photographers, interior designers or games designers.



Thinking outside the square ... design student Deborah Cocks.

“These courses are a wonderful opportunity for people in creative and non-creative industries, including the corporate world, who might need some inspiration and possibly a different perspective towards their career,” says Brushfield.

Designers interested in the business side of their profession should look at the Masterclasses offered at the Billy Blue College of Design. Courses cover job-search skills and business and planning skills for designers.

“Our lecturers all have extensive and current commercial experience, so they can impart their insights, commercial know-how, tips and tricks, accepted best practice, design principles and the ‘what to do’ – not

just ‘how to do it,’” says Masterclass co-ordinator, Fran Kirby.

Graphic designers and desktop publishers wishing to move into web publishing may benefit from one of the technical design courses offered through the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Sydney.

“These courses would mainly benefit designers and design industry professionals, as well as small business operators who want to set up a website or become more independent of their website designers,” says the course tutor, Rolando Ramos.

“We also get a lot of high school teachers who need to teach their students web design.”

Courses include Dreamweaver, HTML, CSS, and Flash.

> CASE STUDY

DEBORAH COCKS, 49, artist, art history and glass-painting teacher. She has just completed Textiles: Tradition and Contemporary Technology at the College of Fine Arts

Artist Deborah Cocks has been working with glass for 24 years and has exhibited her works in private and public collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The 49-year-old is also a teacher of art history and glass painting and has an art history degree from the Australian National University and graduate diploma (glass) from the University of Sydney.

Cocks wanted to take a short course that would give her some knowledge of the textile industry, specifically the digital design of textiles. It needed to be online because she lives on the Far North Coast of NSW. “Family and work commitments take up most of the day and so it is great to be able to log on and work at my convenience,” Cocks says.

She decided on Textiles: Tradition and Contemporary Technology at the College of Fine Arts. “I am hoping to diversify and use digital manipulations of the designs and patterns I have used on my glasswork as the base for textile designs,” she says.

She is working on a portfolio of designs. “It has provided excellent food for thought and interweaves nicely with my current art practice.”

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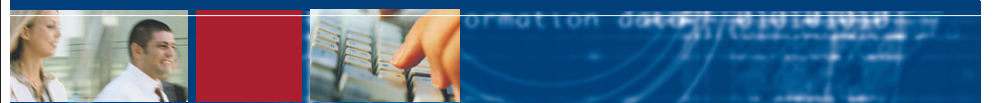


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